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WHY I AM A LIVESTOCK CLUB MEMBER

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A radio talk by Burl Winchester, Garfield County, Oklahoma, delivered through a network of 51 radio stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, Saturday, October 3, 1931.

For my short stay here I have chosen the subject of "Why I am a Livestock Club Member." I suppose if I were to try to explain just why I joined the 4-H club or just why I attempted the livestock project, my only satisfactory conclusion would be a reason for which I am not totally responsible. Why I joined was merely a lucky matter, of course, but I shall be more concerned with just why I continued this work, and why, if it were possible, I would again join the livestock club.

Some of the benefits I have experienced as a result of 4-H club work during the past eight years would perhaps best explain my point. Because I lived on the farm and my dad owned sheep, I, took sheep as my club project. Along with livestock I entered in poultry.

In the first one or two years my winnings at local fairs were not many. The biggest success that perhaps ever came my way was the natural one - that of having my parents' strong encouragement from the start. My sheep paid my way through high school, by having won a few firsts, and championships at the 14 State and National fairs where I showed them. I also benefited from attending several livestock, poultry, and dairy judging schools, and winning a few prizes including three State and two National firsts. I always liked travel and this was another good reason why I am going livestock club work, which has taken me on many inter-state trips and a few out of state trips including one to Ft. Worth, Texas; two to Chicago International Livestock Show; one to St. Louis National Dairy Show, and one observation trip through Ontario and Quebec, Canada.

All of this is merely an assemblage of fragments from a personal experience seeking to give meaning to what we call the spirit of 4-H club work. Thus, I would say that I am a livestock club member for a purpose greater than that of making money, but every industry or institution has to have a means of support.

The chemist works steadily to produce a more efficient compound so that cars may get more miles per gallon of gasoline. The electrician ponders by months in his laboratory over a device which he believes will improve radio. In the same way our home economics departments discover how to prepare food to be more palatable, or to preserve foods more perfectly for future consumption. That is one aim of the 4-H club girl.

Then our aviators break those old records they utilize air currents, atmospheric pressure and every possible force of nature. Does it sound strange to say that agriculture, too, can work with nature? Modern agriculture is one of the greatest sciences because it embodies so many divisions of these lines of knowledge collectively spoken of as science.

Can you think of any business more important than that of good production? That is why Oklahoma 4-H club members are striving to find their air currents; are terracing their fields to conserve moisture, are planting certified seed, and studying the habits of parasites that cause useless losses in crops every year.

Life not only embodies scientific study and planning but it includes the final purpose of all effort - happiness. We may work hard every day, but the efforts of the day are wasted unless they bring happiness or prepare the way for it. Oklahoma 4-H clubs are laying stress on the health phase of our work. Also are we attempting to make the rural life more pleasant by bringing those comforts, previously enjoyed in cities only, to the farm, making the farm a place to live.

By applying on our farms and in our homes the various phases of 4-H club work we believe we can live a well rounded life. The 4-H program will help solve the problem of farm relief, and while dwelling upon that subject I will say that so far as we have any record, there has never been one Oklahoma 4-H Club member or parent of club members that have ever applied or received any Government first aid or farm relief. Oklahoma is proud of that record and is trying to maintain it, which is only possible by the developing of those potential qualities which make every individual fit into society.

I am a livestock club member because I have found a pleasure; because I have seen that the purpose of 4-H clubs is constructive; because 4-H club work teaches me the art of personal expression, and the joy of sportsmanship-to be a good loser as well as a good winner - and finally because 4-H work makes men - such men as are citizens, as are real neighbors, as make the nation a better place in which to live. That is my idea of Oklahoma's program of 4-H club work.